



Storm Water Phase II Proposed Rule

Public Education and Outreach Minimum Control Measure

Storm Water Phase II Proposed Rule Fact Sheet Series

Overview

1.0 – Storm Water Phase II
Proposed Rule Overview

Small MS4 Program

2.0 – Small MS4 Storm Water
Program Overview

2.1 – Who's Covered? Designation
and Waivers of Regulated Small
MS4s

2.2 – Urbanized Areas: Definition
and Description

Minimum Control Measures

2.3 – Public Education and
Outreach Minimum Control
Measure

2.4 – Public Participation/
Involvement Minimum Control
Measure

2.5 – Illicit Discharge Detection and
Elimination Minimum Control
Measure

2.6 – Construction Site Runoff
Control Minimum Control Measure

2.7 – Post-Construction Runoff
Control Minimum Control Measure

2.8 – Pollution Prevention/Good
Housekeeping Minimum Control
Measure

2.9 – Permitting and Reporting:
The Process and Requirements

2.10 – Federal and State-Owned
MS4s: Program Implementation

Construction Program

3.0 – Construction Program
Overview

Industrial "No Exposure"

4.0 – Conditional No Exposure
Exemption for Industrial Activity

This fact sheet is based on the Storm Water Phase II Proposed Rule. Therefore, the information provided herein is subject to change upon publication of the final Phase II rule in November 1999. A revised series of fact sheets will be provided at that time. A comprehensive list of the current fact sheets is in the text box at left.

This fact sheet profiles the proposed Public Education and Outreach minimum control measure, one of six measures an owner or operator of a Phase II-regulated small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) would be required to include in its storm water management program to meet the conditions of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. This fact sheet outlines the Phase II Proposed Rule requirements and offers some general guidance on how to satisfy them. It is important to keep in mind that the small MS4 owner or operator would have a great deal of flexibility in choosing exactly how to satisfy the minimum control measure requirements.

Why Is Public Education and Outreach Necessary?

Having an informed and knowledgeable community is crucial to the success of a storm water management problem since it helps to ensure the following:

- **Greater support** for the storm water management program as the public gains a greater understanding of the reasons why the program is necessary and important. Public support is particularly beneficial when owners/operators of small MS4s attempt to institute new funding initiatives for the program or seek volunteers to help implement the program; and
- **Greater compliance** with the storm water management program as the public becomes aware of the personal responsibilities expected of them and others in the community, including the individual actions they can take to protect or improve the quality of area waters.

What Is EPA Proposing?

Under the proposed rule, to satisfy this minimum control measure, the owner or operator of a regulated small MS4 would need to:

- ❑ Develop and implement a public education and outreach program to distribute educational materials to the community, or conduct equivalent outreach activities, about the detrimental effects of storm water discharges on local waterbodies and the steps that can be taken to reduce storm water pollution; and
- ❑ Determine the appropriate best management practices (BMPs) and measurable goals for this minimum control measure. Some program implementation approaches, BMPs (i.e., the program actions/activities), and measurable goals are suggested below.

What Are Some Guidelines for Developing and Implementing This Measure?

There are three main action areas that are important when implementing a successful public education and outreach program:

① Forming Partnerships

Owners or operators of regulated small MS4s would be encouraged to enter into partnerships with other governmental entities to fulfill this minimum control measure's requirements. It is generally more cost-effective to use an existing program, or to develop a new regional or state-wide education program, than to have numerous owners/operators developing their own local programs. Owners/operators would be encouraged to also look to non-governmental organizations (e.g., environmental, civic, and industrial organizations) for assistance, since many already have educational materials and perform outreach activities.

② Using Educational Materials and Strategies

Owners or operators of regulated small MS4s could use storm water educational information provided by their State, Tribe, EPA Region, or environmental, public interest, or trade organizations instead of developing their own materials. Owners/operators should strive to make their materials and activities relevant to local situations and issues, and incorporate a variety of strategies to ensure maximum coverage. Some examples include:

- **Brochures or fact sheets** for general public and specific audiences;
- **Recreational guides** to educate groups such as golfers, hikers, paddlers, climbers, fishermen, and campers;
- **Alternative information sources**, such as web sites, bumper stickers, refrigerator magnets, posters for bus and subway stops, and restaurant placemats;
- **A library of educational materials** for community and school groups;
- **Volunteer citizen educators** to staff a **public education task force**;
- **Speaking engagements** for community groups;
- **Event participation** with educational displays at home shows and community festivals;
- **Educational programs** for school-age children;
- **Storm drain stenciling** of storm drains with messages such as "Do Not Dump - Drains Directly to Lake;"
- **Storm water hotlines** for information and for citizen reporting of polluters;
- **Economic incentives** to citizens and businesses (e.g., rebates to homeowners purchasing mulching lawnmowers or biodegradable lawn products);
- **Tributary signage** to increase public awareness of local water resources; and
- **Watershed and beach cleanups** involving students and community groups.

③ Reaching Diverse Audiences

The public education program should use a mix of appropriate local strategies to inform a variety of audiences and communities, including minority and disadvantaged communities, as well as children. Printing posters and brochures in more than one language or posting large warning signs (e.g., cautioning against

fishing or swimming) near storm sewer outfalls would help to reach audiences that are less likely to read standard materials. Some materials or outreach programs should also be directed toward specific groups of commercial, industrial, and institutional entities likely to have significant storm water impacts. For example, information should be provided to restaurants on the effects of grease clogging storm drains and to auto garages on the effects of dumping used oil into storm drains.

What Would Be Appropriate Measurable Goals?

Measurable goals, which would be required for each minimum control measure, are meant to help gauge permit compliance and program effectiveness. The measurable goals, as well as the BMPs, would greatly depend on the needs and characteristics of the owner/operator and the area served by its small MS4. The measurable goals should be chosen using an integrated approach that would fully address the requirements and intent of the minimum control measure. An integrated approach for this minimum measure could include the following measurable goals:

Target Date Activity

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| 1 year..... | Brochures developed (bilingual, if appropriate) and distributed in water utility bills; a storm water hotline in place; volunteer educators trained. |
| 2 years..... | A web site created; school curricula developed; every storm drain stenciled. |
| 3 years..... | A certain percentage of restaurants certifying to no longer dumping grease and other pollutants down storm sewer drains. |
| 4 years..... | A certain percentage reduction in litter or animal waste detected in discharges. |

For Additional Information

Contact

- ☞ U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management
- Phone : 202 260-5816
 - E-mail: SW2@epa.gov
 - Internet: www.epa.gov/owm/sw2.htm

Reference Documents

- ☞ Storm Water Phase II Proposed Rule Fact Sheet Series.
- Contact the U.S. EPA Water Resource Center at 202 260-7786 or at waterpubs@epa.gov
 - Internet: www.epa.gov/owm/sw2.htm
- ☞ Storm Water Phase II Proposed Rule, published on Jan. 9, 1998 in the *Federal Register* (63 FR 1536).
- Internet: www.epa.gov/owm/sw2.htm